

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

BARON WOLMAN,

Plaintiff,

- against -

BUZZFEED, INC.

Defendant.

Docket No. 1:19-cv-9461

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

COMPLAINT

Plaintiff Baron Wolman (“Wolman” or “Plaintiff”) by and through his undersigned counsel, as and for his Complaint against Defendant BuzzFeed, Inc. (“Buzzfeed” or “Defendant”) hereby alleges as follows:

NATURE OF THE ACTION

1. This is an action for copyright infringement under Section 501 of the Copyright Act. This action arises out of Defendant’s unauthorized reproduction and public display of a copyrighted photograph of the rock band Big Brother and the Holding Company, owned and registered by Wolman, a professional photographer. Accordingly, Wolman seeks monetary relief under the Copyright Act of the United States, as amended, 17 U.S.C. § 101 *et seq.*

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This claim arises under the Copyright Act, 17 U.S.C. § 101 *et seq.*, and this Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1338(a).

3. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant because Defendant resides in and/or transacts business in New York.

4. Venue is proper in this District pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b).

PARTIES

5. Wolman is a professional photographer in the business of licensing his photographs to online and print media for a fee having a usual place of business at 52 Vereda Serena Road, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508.

6. Upon information and belief, BuzzFeed is a foreign business corporation duly organized and existing under the laws of the State of Delaware, with a place of business 111 East 18th Street, New York, New York 10003. Upon information and belief, BuzzFeed is registered with the New York State Department of Corporations to do business in New York. At all times material, hereto, BuzzFeed has owned and operated a website at the URL: www.BuzzFeed.com (the “Website”).

STATEMENT OF FACTS

A. Background and Plaintiff’s Ownership of the Photograph

7. Wolman photographed the rock band Big Brother and the Holding Company (the “Photograph”). A true and correct copy of the Photograph is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

8. Wolman is the author of the Photograph and has at all times been the sole owner of all right, title and interest in and to the Photograph, including the copyright thereto.

9. The Photograph was registered with the United States Copyright Office and was given registration number VA 1-726-336.

B. Defendant’s Infringing Activities

10. BuzzFeed ran an article on the Website entitled *21 Things You Didn’t Know About Janie Joplin*. See URL: https://www.buzzfeed.com/skarlan/21-things-you-didnt-know-about-janis-joplin-82j3?utm_term=.wrJaLMZZaK#.htqGAINNGL. The article featured the

Photograph. A true and correct copy of the article and a screenshot of the Photograph on the article is attached hereto as Exhibit B.

11. Buzzfeed did not license the Photograph from Plaintiff for its article, nor did Buzzfeed have Plaintiff's permission or consent to publish the Photograph on its Website.

12. Plaintiff first discovered the use of the Photograph on the Website in May 2017.

CLAIM FOR RELIEF
(COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT AGAINST DEFENDANT)
(17 U.S.C. §§ 106, 501)

13. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each and every allegation contained in Paragraphs 1-12 above.

14. Buzzfeed infringed Plaintiff's copyright in the Photograph by reproducing and publicly displaying the Photograph on the Website. Buzzfeed is not, and has never been, licensed or otherwise authorized to reproduce, publically display, distribute and/or use the Photograph.

15. The acts of Defendant complained of herein constitute infringement of Plaintiff's copyright and exclusive rights under copyright in violation of Sections 106 and 501 of the Copyright Act, 17 U.S.C. §§ 106 and 501.

16. Upon information and belief, the foregoing acts of infringement by Defendant have been willful, intentional, and purposeful, in disregard of and indifference to Plaintiff's rights.

17. As a direct and proximate cause of the infringement by the Defendant of Plaintiff's copyright and exclusive rights under copyright, Plaintiff is entitled to damages and Defendant's profits pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504(b) for the infringement.

18. Alternatively, Plaintiff is entitled to statutory damages up to \$150,000 per work infringed for Defendant's willful infringement of the Photograph, pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504(c).

19. Plaintiff further is entitled to his attorney's fees and full costs pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 505.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests judgment as follows:

1. That Defendant Buzzfeed be adjudged to have infringed upon Plaintiff's copyrights in the Photograph in violation of 17 U.S.C §§ 106 and 501;
2. That Plaintiff be awarded either: a) Plaintiff's actual damages and Defendant's profits, gains or advantages of any kind attributable to Defendant's infringement of Plaintiff's Photograph; or b) alternatively, statutory damages of up to \$150,000 per copyrighted work infringed pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504;
3. That Defendant be required to account for all profits, income, receipts, or other benefits derived by Defendant as a result of its unlawful conduct;
4. That Plaintiff be awarded his costs, expenses and attorneys' fees pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 505;
5. That Plaintiff be awarded pre-judgment interest; and
6. Such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Plaintiff hereby demands a trial by jury on all issues so triable in accordance with Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 38(b).

Dated: Valley Stream, New York
October 13, 2019

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